Management of Christian Spiritual Programs to Improve Students' Religious Character

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the management of Christian spiritual programs to improve students' religious character at SMKS Multistudi High School, Batam. The research used a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. Quantitative data were obtained through questionnaires completed by 41 students, while qualitative data were collected through interviews with the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, the Christian Religious Education teacher, and the Rohkris advisor, as well as activity documentation. Quantitative analysis used descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The research results showed that students' religious character was in the good to very good category, indicated by increased discipline, responsibility, politeness, and social concern. The findings indicate that the improvement in religious character was influenced by program management, including structured planning, clear task distribution, habit-based implementation, and continuous evaluation. Programs integrated with Christian Religious Education strengthened the internalization of values in school life. Thus, the quality of spiritual program management became the main factor in the success of shaping students' religious character, not simply the existence of religious activities.

Keywords: management, spirituality, religious character, students

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and the pace of globalization have brought significant changes to students' lives, not only in cognitive but also in moral and spiritual aspects. The accessibility of information in the digital era has caused a shift in values, marked by declining discipline, low respect toward teachers, increasing individualism, and weakened faith awareness among students in the school environment [1]. Modern education is no longer adequate when it focuses only on the mastery of knowledge and skills, but it must also be able to shape students' personality and moral character [2].

SMK, as a vocational education institution, generally emphasizes job competencies and industrial readiness. However, this orientation often results in less optimal spiritual development; thus, students possess technical abilities but are weak in integrity, responsibility, and moral values [3]. In fact, character education is a process of shaping individuals to understand, internalize, and practice moral values in daily life [4]. Without the development of religious character, graduates have the potential to possess competencies but lack strong professional ethics [5]

Religious character is an essential component of character education because it relates to the relationship between humans and God as well as with fellow human beings. The theory of religiosity proposed by Glock and Stark explains that religiosity encompasses five dimensions, namely belief, religious practice, spiritual experience, religious knowledge, and behavioral consequences [6]. Meanwhile, Lickona emphasizes that character is formed through three main elements, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action [7] Thus, religious character is not only reflected in worship activities, but also in attitudes of honesty, discipline, love, responsibility, and social concern [8].

Religious character education needs to be implemented systematically through well-planned school programs. Research shows that habituation, teacher role modeling, and school culture play a significant role in shaping students' religious character [9]. Religious development programs that are conducted regularly, integrated with school activities, and involve all members of the school community have been proven effective in improving students' religious behavior [10]. However, many spiritual activities in schools remain ceremonial-oriented and have not been managed systematically, so their impact on students' character has not been optimal [11].

To achieve program effectiveness, an educational management approach is required. Management is a process of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising to achieve objectives effectively and efficiently [12]. Management is also defined as the coordination of work activities through others to achieve

organizational goals [13]. In the context of education, management functions to regulate human resources, programs, and school culture so that development activities are carried out sustainably [14]. The implementation of management functions in character programs has been proven to improve the consistency of implementation and the success of forming students' moral values [15].

Several previous studies show that the formation of religious character can be carried out through the habituation of worship practices, religious activities, teacher role modeling, and the strengthening of school culture [16]. Other studies state that the integration of character education with school management improves the effectiveness of students' moral development [17]. However, these studies generally only evaluate religious activities or school culture without comprehensively examining how management functions are implemented in spiritual programs [18]. In practice, many school spiritual programs are conducted routinely but have not been managed according to clear management principles. Activities are often symbolic and unstructured, and they have not been integrated into the shaping of students' character. This condition results in less optimal outcomes of spiritual development. Therefore, the management of spiritual programs needs to be planned, organized, implemented consistently, and evaluated continuously.

Based on these conditions, this study offers novelty by comprehensively analyzing the management of Christian spiritual programs through the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating, and directly linking them to indicators of students' religious character. This approach not only assesses worship activities, but also their impact on students' behavior in daily school life [19]. Thus, this study contributes to the development of spirituality-based character education management in Vocational High Schools (SMK), in line with research findings that the structured management of religious activities can improve students' religious attitudes and moral behavior in schools [20].

The objective of this study is to analyze the management of Christian spiritual programs in improving the religious character of vocational high school students, including the stages of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the program, as well as its impact on the shaping of students' religious behavior.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, where quantitative data were collected at the initial stage, followed by qualitative data to deepen and explain the quantitative results. This design was selected because the study not only measured students' religious character but also aimed to understand the management process of Christian spiritual programs that underlie it. Mixed methods allow researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding through the integration of numerical and narrative data

[21], and are effectively used in educational research to explain complex phenomena [22].

The study was conducted at SMKS Multistudi High School, Batam. The subjects at the quantitative stage were 41 students who participated in Christian spiritual activities and completed the religious character questionnaire. At the qualitative stage, the research informants consisted of the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, the Christian Religious Education teacher, and the Rohkris (*Rohani Kristen*; Christian Spiritual Organization) advisor. The selection of informants was conducted because they were directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the spiritual program and were therefore considered to understand the phenomenon under study [23].

The quantitative sampling technique used total sampling, in which the entire population was designated as respondents, because the number was limited [24]. Meanwhile, the selection of qualitative informants used purposive sampling, namely the selection of data sources based on specific considerations according to the research needs [25]. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research to obtain in-depth and relevant data [26].

The research data sources included both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through the completion of the religious character questionnaire, interviews, and observation of spiritual activities. Secondary data were in the form of school documents such as the Rohkris work program, worship schedules, activity reports, and activity documentation. The use of multiple data sources was conducted to enhance the depth and validity of the research findings [27].

Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, observation, and documentation. The questionnaire was used to quantitatively assess students' religious character using a Likert scale. The use of a Likert scale questionnaire is effective for measuring individual attitudes and behaviors in educational research [28]. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, the Christian Religious Education teacher, and the Rohkris advisor to obtain information regarding the planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluation of the spiritual program. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to obtain in-depth data while remaining focused on the research objectives [29]. Observation was conducted directly on the implementation of worship activities, collective prayers, and students' religious behavior in the school environment. Observation helps to understand the actual behavior of research subjects in a contextual manner [30]. Documentation was used to complement the data in the form of activity archives, attendance lists, and activity photographs as evidence of program implementation [31].

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, including mean values and the achievement percentage of students' religious character. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the condition of the research variables without making generalizations

[32]. The percentage was calculated by comparing the obtained score with the maximum score [33]. The results of the analysis were then categorized into the criteria of very good, good, sufficient, and poor.

Qualitative data analysis used an interactive model that included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [34]. Data reduction was conducted by selecting information relevant to the management of spiritual programs, which was then presented in a narrative form to facilitate interpretation before drawing the research conclusions [35].

The data integration stage involved linking the quantitative and qualitative results. Qualitative data were used to explain the factors underlying students' level of religious character in relation to the implementation of the management functions of the Christian spiritual program. Data integration is a key characteristic of mixed methods research because it produces a more comprehensive understanding than a single approach alone [36] .

Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation by comparing results from questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted with the informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation was consistent with the actual conditions [37].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the management of Christian spiritual programs to improve students' religious character at SMKS Multistudi High School, Batam. Based on the results of the questionnaire administered to 41 students, students' religious character fell into the good-to-very good category. This was reflected in the dominance of agree and strongly agree responses across almost all indicators, with an average percentage above 85%. Across several indicators, all respondents demonstrated positive acceptance, with no rejection. These quantitative findings indicate that religious values are not only understood but also have become a behavioral tendency among students in school life.

These findings were strengthened by interviews with the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, the Christian Religious Education teacher, and the Rohkris advisor. The school positioned the spiritual program as a strategic policy and incorporated it into the school work plan. The program did not stand alone, but was integrated with character development and Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning in the classroom. The Christian Religious Education teacher stated that students who were active in spiritual activities showed changes in attitude, including increased discipline, responsibility, and respect toward teachers. The Rohkris advisor also observed an improvement in social concern and politeness in students' interactions. Thus, the qualitative data confirm the quantitative results that the spiritual program provides a tangible contribution to the shaping of religious character.

The improvement of students' religious character in this study was not incidental but rather the result of a program management process that formed a systematic cause-and-effect sequence. The program began with annual planning involving school leaders and teachers. The planning ensured that the activities had clear developmental objectives so that students understood the meaning of the activities rather than merely participating in formal events. When students understand the purpose of values, moral awareness develops. Subsequently, roles were distributed among the principal, the Christian Religious Education teacher, the Rohkris advisor, and student administrators. A clear structure created consistency in the implementation of activities. Consistency produced habituation, and habituation is the primary mechanism in the shaping of character [37]. At the implementation stage, routine worship, reflection, role modeling, and active student involvement were applied. These methods transformed values from knowledge into personal experience; thus, the values were internalized in behavior [38]. Periodic evaluation that assessed changes in students' attitudes enabled the program to be continuously improved and sustained. Therefore, changes in students' behavior were a logical consequence of a systematic educational process, not the result of momentary activities.

The findings of this study indicate that several factors influenced the success of the shaping of religious character. Supporting factors included strong school policies, the provision of time and facilities, the integration of Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning with spiritual activities, student involvement, and repeated habituation. A consistent school environment accelerated the internalization of moral values because students experienced the same values across various situations [39]. The inhibiting factors included the pack practicum schedule in Vocational High Schools (SMK) and differences in students' motivation. However, these constraints affected only a small proportion of students' participation and did not reduce the program's overall effectiveness, as the development system continued to operate.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that the habituation of religious activities can improve students' moral behavior. The findings also support studies on religious school culture that shapes students' discipline and responsibility, and reinforce the view that teacher role modeling plays an important role in character education [40]. Nevertheless, this study offers a new perspective in which the primary determining factor is not the number of religious activities but the quality of program management. This means that religious activities without structured management do not automatically shape character, whereas activities managed as an educational system produce stable behavioral change.

This study has several strengths, namely the use of mixed methods to strengthen the data, the comprehensive examination of management functions, and the measurement of observable changes in students' behavior. However, the study also has limitations

because it was conducted in only one school, the number of respondents was limited, and it did not measure long-term impact. Nevertheless, the findings still demonstrate a consistent pattern between the quantitative and qualitative data.

Overall, this study confirms that students' religious character is shaped through an educational mechanism that is planned, organized, implemented consistently, and evaluated continuously. Thus, the success of the spiritual program is not determined by the number of worship activities, but by the quality of its management as a character development system in schools.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the management of Christian spiritual programs at SMKS Multistudi High School, Batam, is effective in improving students' religious character, as indicated by the predominance of positive responses and behavioral changes, including increased discipline, responsibility, politeness, and social concern. The improvement occurred not because of the number of religious activities, but because the program was managed through consistent planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating, and was integrated with Christian Religious Education and school culture. Support from school policies, student involvement, and the habituation of religious values became the primary success factors, while time constraints and differences in students' motivation affected only a small proportion of students. Thus, the quality of spiritual program management as a character education system is the key factor in the shaping of religious character in vocational high schools.

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shaping of students' religious character in vocational high schools.

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